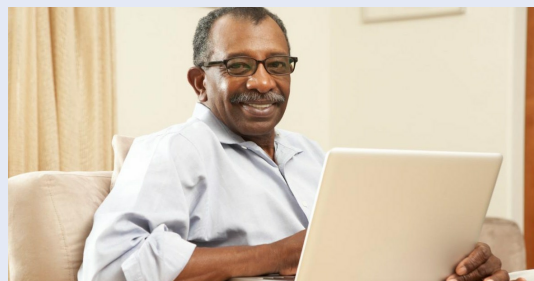


May 26, 2021

Age-Friendly Public Health Systems Learning and Action Network News



News:

Trust for America's Health has recently released the [***Pain in the Nation: Alcohol, Drug and Suicide Deaths***](#) report. Preliminary data included in this report note that the COVID-19 crisis created higher rates of mental distress, substance use, and drug overdose. Some of the additional findings include:

- Blacks have a higher drug-related death rate than whites. Additionally, drug induced deaths are increasing in communities of color at a faster rate than among whites.
- Stressors from the COVID-19 pandemic are impacting rates of alcohol and drug use and drug overdose deaths. Preliminary data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) show 27 percent increase in drug overdose deaths from October 2019-September 2020. And a June 2020 CDC study found that 13 percent of adults “started or increased substance use to cope with pandemic-related stress or emotions.”

Some of the recommendations noted in the report include tailoring prevention and intervention programs for communities of color; expanding the mental health and substance use treatment workforce; promote diversity and culturally informed practices within the workforce; and building community capacity for early identification and intervention with individuals who need mental health care.

2021 Older Americans Month

The 2021 theme is “Communities of Strength.” The Administration for Community Living has several [**activity ideas and resources**](#) available to help communities highlight the strength of older adults and the power of connection and engagement in building strong communities.

Events and Opportunities:

Age-Friendly Public Health Systems Monthly Trainings

TFAH's June training will highlight the Healthy Brain Initiative Roadmap. Presenters from CDC and the Alzheimer's Association will describe how the roadmap can be used to help communities address Alzheimer's disease by working with existing public health programs and public health practitioners will share examples of implementation. This session will occur on June 17th at 3:00 pm ET. Register [here](#).

Stakeholder Session SNAP-Ed Webinar – May 26, 2021, 2:00 pm ET. This U.S. Department of Agriculture webinar will explain how 2021 SNAP-Ed final allocations were calculated, with clarification on changes due to the Consumer Price Index. The session will

also include a presentation of technical assistance and special projects to be implemented using 2% funding. Register [here](#).

FAQs About COVID-19 Vaccines that People with Disabilities Should Consider

– *May 26, 2021, 3:00 pm to 4:00 pm ET.* This ACL led webinar will discuss frequently asked questions about COVID-19 vaccines for people with disabilities. Speakers will outline the CDC's vaccination guidelines and address solutions to issues of limited vaccine access and scheduling vaccine appointments among the community. Register [here](#).

Avoid Scams and Fraud Targeting Older Adults – *May 27, 2021, 12:00 p.m. to 1:30 p.m. ET.* Hosted by the FEMA Region 2 National Preparedness Division, this webinar will focus on scams that target seniors, including coronavirus scams, identity theft, and Medicare fraud. Robin E. Eichen, Senior Attorney at the Federal Trade Commission, will discuss how to recognize and avoid scams targeting older individuals and provide resources to report and recover from fraud. Charles Clarkson, Project Director of the Senior Medicare Patrol of New Jersey, will discuss how to prevent Medicare fraud, waste, and abuse. Register [here](#).

Across the Globe: Vaccinating our Most Vulnerable Homebound Patients – *June 3, 2021, 9:00 am ET.* While older adults have been prioritized to receive the COVID-19 vaccine, the challenges in administering vaccines may differ by health system characteristics and local culture. Hosted by the American Academy of Home Care Medicine, this webinar will highlight the vaccine rollout issues in France, Israel, and Japan. Register [here](#).

Elder Abuse in People Living with Dementia: Considerations for Prevention, Detection, and Intervention – *Wednesday, June 23, 2021, 2:00 p.m. to 3:00 pm ET* Hosted by the National Alzheimer's and Dementia Resource Center, this webinar will discuss elder abuse in people living with dementia. A physician and an attorney will share indicators of concern, provide practical tips on when and how to intervene, and highlight the issue of capacity. Register [here](#).

Funding Opportunity – Community Care Corps Issues Request for Proposals

Community Care Corps, funded by the Administration for Community Living, has released a Request for Proposals (RFP) for innovative local models of community caregiving. This funding opportunity is geared towards helping volunteers assist family caregivers or directly care for older adults or adults with disabilities. The purpose of the project is to establish, enhance, or grow volunteer programs for family caregivers, older adults, and people with disabilities. Faith and community-based organizations, institutions of higher education, service organizations, and state, county, and local governments are encouraged to apply. Proposals are due by **Friday, July 9, 2021**. More information can be found [here](#).

Resources:

COVID-19

Findings from COVID-19 and Vaccine Survey

Results from a recent study on COVID-19 vaccine by the American Association on Health and Disability examined the perspectives on vaccine hesitancy and distrust, and barriers to vaccine access among adults with disabilities. In total, 1,150 respondents or 27% of the sample said they were not going to be vaccinated or were not sure. The reasons why this group do not want to get vaccinated include not trusting the safety and/or effectiveness of the vaccine on respondent's disability (63%); not trusting the safety and/or effectiveness of the vaccine on respondent's underlying health condition (58%); not receiving reliable information on the impact of the vaccine on respondent's underlying health condition (42%); not receiving reliable information on the vaccine's impact on respondent's disability (41%); and because of respondent's underlying health condition (42%).

Potential Vaccine Access Barriers among Older Adults that are Homebound

An issue brief from the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation

on [vaccine access barriers among older adults that are homebound](#) is based on a study designed to improve vaccinations for homebound individuals. The study shows that Hispanic older adults are more likely to be homebound; homebound adults often have multiple chronic conditions that increase their risk for COVID-19; the majority of homebound older adults need assistance with daily living; half of homebound older adults have at least one barrier to accessing vaccines; homebound older adults have fewer economic resources; and nearly half of all homebound older adults receive assistance.

Addressing Vaccine Hesitancy, Equity and Transparency

This webinar highlighted issues related to building trust and trustworthiness in communities. Successful strategies for reaching vaccine-hesitant communities, using data to achieve an equitable vaccine response and how vaccine distribution strategies have evolved as supply increases were addressed in this [recorded web forum](#).

Additional Resources

Using Telehealth to Address Loneliness

Androscoggin Home Healthcare & Hospice in Maine created AndroPeerConnects, [a new program using its remote patient monitoring platform to address loneliness](#). The program uses their telehealth platform to connect volunteers and patients with similar interests and backgrounds to prevent feelings of isolation.

Income Related to Dementia Diagnosis

[Research from a study published in Journal of the American Medical Association Network Open](#) found that older adults with high annual household income had lower odds of receiving a dementia diagnosis after referral for diagnostic evaluation. Based on 10,191 cases in Denmark, the results also suggest that people with lower socioeconomic status should be targeted for earlier dementia detection and intervention.

Telehealth Use among Medicare Beneficiaries

Congress and the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) have worked together to ensure telehealth options for Medicare beneficiaries during the pandemic. The goal was to help lower the incidence of patients contracting the virus in a health care facility. As a result, [27% of Medicare beneficiaries have engaged in telehealth visits](#) between the summer and fall of 2020. CMS expanded the approved list of allowable telehealth services to include emergency department visits, physical and occupational therapy, and behavioral health therapy.

Senior Living Experts Discuss Housing

In a recent video interview, senior design experts Alexis Denton, Associate Principal with Perkins Eastman, and Dana Wollschlager, Practice Leader and Partner with Plante Moran Living Forward share the [latest trends in senior housing](#). In this video, they also recap the findings from a recent survey of providers, residents, and staff of senior living communities. Some of the trends include housing in pods and intentional technology enhancements for resident experience.

Personal Perspective on Caregiving

Geriatrician and adjunct professor Dr. Rebecca Elon shares her personal experience with caregiving after her husband and mother were both diagnosed with dementia, and she lost her sister. [During an interview about her experience](#) she shared that “reading about caregiving of this kind was one thing. Experiencing it was entirely different.” In her first four months as a caregiver, she lost 20 pounds but learned how to ask for help from loved ones and medical professionals.

Too Much TV and Brain Health

Researchers at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health have found that adults who watched a moderate to large amount of TV during their 40s through early 60s had [greater cognitive decline and lower gray matter volume in their 70s and 80s](#). Gray matter supports many brain functions, including muscle control, vision, hearing and decision-making. Having higher levels of gray matter have been linked to better cognitive skills.

Benefits of the Silver Sneakers Program for Older Adults

Research from Tivity Health found that older adults that participate in the SilverSneakers exercise program had fewer hospitalizations and emergency department visits than those who were not in the program. The study included 8,555 participants. Results also indicate that SilverSneaker participants were more likely to adhere to medication plans and take advantage of health screenings than nonparticipants.

Impact of Health Behaviors on Dementia Risk

Health behaviors such as eating a healthy diet, exercising regularly, not smoking or drinking alcohol to excess and maintaining good sleep habits and a healthy body weight can lead to a **lower risk of developing dementia**. Based on data from more than 302,000 adults age 50 to 73, results indicate that practicing at least three of these healthy behaviors was associated with a 30% lower dementia risk.

Wait to Decide on Permanent Telehealth

Congress is being urged by the Government Accountability Office (GAO) to wait until the end of the COVID-19 pandemic before making **decisions about a permanent expansion of telehealth coverage** in Medicare and Medicaid. There is still a need for long-term quality and spending data. Continuing these flexibilities post pandemic could increase certain risks to the Medicare and Medicaid programs.

Helping Older Adults Regain Strength

With many older adults unable to go to exercise and wellness facilities, several health plans across the country created **several homebased programs for enrollees**. These plans include completing rehab at home and Member2Member program that pairs older adult “peer health advocates” with members who have noted physical or emotional difficulties on health risk assessments.

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P (202) 223-9870

F (202) 223-9871

E AFPHSNEWS@TFAH.ORG



CONTACT

TRUST FOR AMERICA'S HEALTH

1730 M ST NW

SUITE 900

WASHINGTON, DC 20036

